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VONACHEN, LAWLESS, TRAGER & SLEVIN
Attorneys at Law

John A. Slevin
John R. Pusey
Lawrence E. Schwenger, Jr.
John C. Brady
James E. Konsky
M. Michael Waters
Mark E. Wertz
S. Linn Perkins
Katrina M. Taraska
Mary A. Corrigan

456 Fulton Street, Suite 425
Twin Towers Plaza
Peoria, Illinois 61602-1240

September 22, 2005

Of Counsel:
Donald F. Vonachen
J. Mark Lawless
Thomas E. Trager
Richard N. Slevin

Telephone:
(309) 676-8986
Facsimile:
(309) 676-4130
E-Mail:
vlts@vltslaw.com



Mr. Vernon A. Williams, Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit, Suite 713
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
SEP 29 2005
Part of
Public Record

RE: ***Docket No. AB-1066X, Central Illinois Railroad Company – Discontinuance of Service Exemption – in Peoria County, Illinois***

Dear Mr. Williams:

I am the attorney for The Pleasure Driveway and Park District of Peoria, Illinois ("Peoria Park District"). I write this letter on behalf of the Peoria Park District to voice its support for the Petition for Exemption from 49 U.S.C. 10903-10905 for Discontinuance of Rail Service filed by the Central Illinois Railroad Company.

In October, 2002, the Peoria Park District entered into agreements with the City of Peoria ("City") and the Village of Peoria Heights ("Village") for the Peoria Park District to construct, operate, and maintain on the railroad right of way owned by the City and the Village known as the Kellar Branch a multi-use hiking, biking, and running trail as an integral part of the Rock Island/Pimeteoui Trail. The creation of a recreational trail on the Kellar Branch will be the last link in a continuous recreational trail from Toulon, Illinois to the Bob Michel Bridge in downtown Peoria. The City Council and Village Board of Trustees overwhelmingly supported the agreements with the Park District, finding that it is in the best interests of the residents of the City and the Village to convert a portion of the Kellar Branch to such a multi-use recreational trail. The City and Village entered into the agreements with the Park District with the understanding the Kellar Branch would not be converted to a regional multi-use recreational trail until such time as alternative rail service was provided to shippers on the Kellar Branch. Such alternative rail service was provided when the City acquired track to the west of the Kellar Branch from the Union Pacific Railroad Company and constructed a connecting track from the northwest end of the Kellar Branch to the former Union Pacific tracks.

The Park District's planning process for the conversion of the Kellar Branch into a regional recreational trail has extended over more than two decades. The Park District has applied for and received a number of grants over the years to construct the trail from the State of Illinois

VONACHEN, LAWLESS, TRAGER & SLEVIN

Page 2
September 22, 2005

Department of Natural Resources ("IDNR"). Unfortunately, some of the funding from such grants is no longer available because of the years that have gone by since the grants were awarded. The Park District is ready to commence the removal of the rails and ties and start the construction of the recreational trail – a process that is estimated to cost approximately \$4,000,000. If the Petition filed herein by Central Illinois Railroad Company is substantially delayed, the Park District will lose additional IDNR grant funding of up to \$200,000. In order to keep such funds, the Park District must have utilized such funds for the construction of the recreational trail by December 31, 2005. Therefore, it is imperative that the Surface Transportation Board render its decision expeditiously so that the City, the Village, the Park District, and the thousands of people who will utilize the trail will not be damaged by the loss of State funding to build the trail.

The Park District respectfully requests that the Central Illinois Railroad Company's Petition for Discontinuance of Service on the Subject Rail Line be granted on the 50th day after its filing or as soon thereafter as possible. The Park District also agrees with and supports Central Illinois Railroad Company's Motion to Reject the Notice of Intent to File Offer of Financial Assistance filed by Pioneer Industrial Railway Company.

Very truly yours,

VONACHEN, LAWLESS, TRAGER & SLEVIN

By: _____


JAMES E. KONSKY

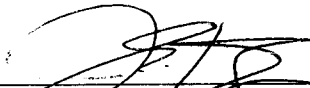
JEK/jks

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VERIFICATION

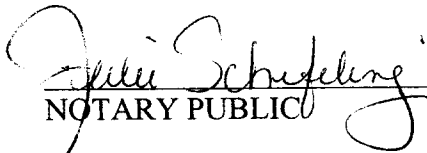
STATE OF ILLINOIS)
) SS
COUNTY OF PEORIA)

JAMES E. KONSKY, being duly sworn on oath, deposes and states that he has read the foregoing letter, that he knows the contents thereof, and that the facts therein stated are true and correct.



JAMES E. KONSKY

Subscribed and sworn
to before me this 22nd
day of September, 2005.



NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires: 1/26/2006



CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

This is to certify that in accordance with the requirements of 49 C.F.R. § 1152.60(d) and 49 C.F.R. § 1152.50(d), on September 22, 2005, I served a copy of the foregoing Petition by first-class, U.S. mail, postage prepaid, on the following:

Illinois Department of Transportation
2300 South Dirksen Parkway
Springfield, IL 62764

MTMCTEA
Attn: Railroads for National Defense
720 Thimble Shoals Boulevard
Suite 130
Newport News, VA 23606-2574

The National Park Service
Recreational Resources Assistance Division
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240-0001

United States Department of Agriculture
Chief of Forest Service
4th Floor N.W., Auditor's Building
14th Street & Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Mr. Thomas F. McFarland
Thomas F. McFarland, P. C.
208 South LaSalle Street, Suite 1890
Chicago, IL 60604-1112

Mr. Daniel A. LaKemper
General Counsel
Pioneer Industrial Railway Co.
1318 S. Johanson Road
Peoria, IL 61607


JAMES E. KONSKY